

City Council of the City of New Castle
Regular City Council Meeting
Town Hall, 201 Delaware Street, New Castle
Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Call to order: 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Councilperson Megginson - present
Councilperson Vannucci - present
Council President Ratchford - present
Councilperson Petty - absent
Councilperson Di Mondì - present

Also present:

William Barthel, City Administrator
Donald Reese, Mayor
Janet Carlin, City Treasurer
Daniel Tjaden, Police Chief
Daniel Losco, City Solicitor
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Official & Fire Marshall

Agenda Change: Proposed Ordinance 505 was withdrawn from the Meeting Agenda and will be considered at a future Council Meeting.

Approval of Minutes by Date: 6/17 Budget Workshop; 7/23 Special Meeting; 8/26 Special Meeting; 9/25 Special Meeting; 9/29 Special Meeting; 10/13 Regular Meeting; and 10/29 Special Meeting and **Approval to Accept Staff Reports** as submitted.

Councilperson Megginson Motioned and Councilperson Vannucci seconded approval of the Minutes and Staff Reports without changes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Treasurer's Report:

City Treasurer Janet Carlin reported on the balances of the city's accounts as of October 31, 2015. The total cash on hand in all accounts is \$3,997,164.22.

Councilperson Vannucci Motioned and Councilperson Megginson seconded approval of the Treasurer's Report as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Report from the City Administrator & Staff:

City Administrator Barthel reported:

- Net revenue from River Towns Ride & Festival Bike Event will be approximately \$20,000. Income was generated from program ad sales, ride registrations and other donations for curb repairs. The only cost still outstanding is for the beer. The committee and volunteers were thanked for their efforts to present a great event.
- DelDOT has informed the City that they are doing an enhanced traffic study to determine if the traffic light at 6th and Delaware Streets is warranted. Replacement cost will be

\$250,000 to \$300,000. DelDOT will come before Council with the results of their study before taking action to replace or remove the traffic light.

- Tax delinquency notices were sent on October 22 to 247 residents and commercial property owners. In less than one month, taxes have been collected from 33 including one major commercial property owner.
- The bid package for pier construction will be let this week and are due back December 11. Construction is expected to begin in January.

Police Chief Tjaden reported:

- There have been two recent drug arrests for heroin.
- Attempts have been made to address truck traffic in town. The GPS companies were called and all claim their products are updated.
- Hayride was a great success with 75 to 80 kids riding. Police and Fire Company are planning a Christmas Party at the Goodwill Fire House.
- Police response to alarm calls and burglaries are down. Drug arrests are up from 83 to 105.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked if the “No Trucks” sign at Buttonwood is permanent. Can we use it at other locations in the City? Chief Tjaden reported that the City has more signs, but the cost of the battery to restart them is about \$1,000. The City Administrator added that the City can invest the \$1000 for batteries and start up the signs in other locations.

Council Communications:

Councilperson Megginson reported:

- Mumford & Miller are working at Washington and 7th Streets to repair some concrete damage. The concrete was power washed and some topping was added.
- Gail Seitz, Cindy Snyder and Sally Denton were thanked for leading the River Towns Ride & Festival Committee along with the Police and Public Works and the volunteers. Everyone did a wonderful job. He added that it is time for City to look at a 501©3 plan.
- Ted Joslin was thanked for having a link to the new City Video on the Cobblestones web site. The video was well done.

Business from the Mayor:

Mayor Reese reported:

- The entire day of the River Towns Ride & Festival was excellent. He thanked the committee and volunteers for a great day.
- The new Video introducing the City was locally produced and is accessible on New Castle Historic Society and City web sites. The Mayor congratulated everyone for a very nice job.
- Veterans Day is celebrated tomorrow and we should take time to remember them.

Business from the Council President:

President Ratchford reported:

- Municipal Services Commission was thanked for changing their work schedule to coordinate with DelDOT on improvements to Route 9.
- Council was reminded that the request for funding from the Trustees for the next fiscal year is due in December.

- Russ Smith was thanked for his Visitor Experience presentation at the last meeting of Council. It sparked a lot of conversation. In a follow-up conversation with the Historical Society, they expressed the desire to be the Visitor Center for the entire City not just the museums. City representatives also recently met with the Greater Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Business from the Floor (concerning agenda items only):

None

Mayoral Proclamation declaring the month of November as “Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month” in the city of New Castle.

City Solicitor Losco and Mayor Reese read the Proclamation.

Mayoral Proclamation declaring Saturday, November 28th as “Small Business Saturday” in the City of New Castle.

City Solicitor Losco and Mayor Reese read the Proclamation.

Old Business

Presentation on Bayshore Byway Branding and Status:

Steve Borleske, Chairman of the Bayshore Byway Planning Committee and a Greenways Volunteer updated Council on the Bayshore Initiative and By-way. In 2012, the Governor and DNREC launched the Bayshore Initiative. Concurrently, Delaware Greenways and DelDOT started a program to create a Scenic Byway along Route 9. The two programs have been combined. Mr. Borleske thanked President Ratchford her participation on the committee.

October 30th was a significant day as the Governor and the Secretaries of DNREC, DelDOT and DEDO announced 4 things at Thousand Acre Marsh:

- Acquisition of more land for public open space
- A new trail in Thousand Acre Marsh
- Addition of a wildlife viewing station
- Official launch of Bayshore Byway and the new branding program

Significant activity is planned to brand the Byway. A management plan has been developed for the next 5 years. One key focus of the branding program is to define the area as an ecotourism destination with natural and historic sites.

The consultant hired to brand the Byway met with people from New Castle to Lewes. A full package of promotional materials was produced and is available free to all communities along the Bayshore Byway.

The Bayshore Byway currently spans Route 9 from New Castle to south of Dover and may expand to Lewes.

President Ratchford thanked Tom Maddux for serving as the Representative of the City to the Committee.

Spirit of Christmas/Dickens Experience (12/12/15) request for parking restrictions:

Jim Meek of The Strand said the Spirit of Christmas was originally started by the Visitors Bureau and the Presbyterian Church. The New Castle Historical Society has joined them to expand the event to include the Dickens Experience. Historically, the event has focused on visiting historic homes decorated for the holidays. The Saturday house tours are free. There is a fee for the fancy ball the night before and the Victorian Tea on Saturday in the Arsenal. The Dickens Christmas Play will be performed on the street again this year. The Court House believes 2,500 people visited during last year's event.

This year, the Historical Society proposes creating the play two times in front of the Court House at Market Street. They are requesting that about eight parking spaces from the Court House steps to Market Street be blocked and that police be available with barricades at 3rd and Delaware Streets in case traffic needs to be blocked due to the play.

After the performances, Mr. Meek will lead a group of carolers up Delaware Street.

Gene Dempsey of Delaware Street does not recall any discussion by the committee to close any streets. There is a need to block some parking spots but the streets should remain open. Mr. Meek replied that there is no need to block additional spaces and suggested that it might be helpful to make Delaware Street one way to reduce traffic.

President Ratchford advised that the Police Chief will review their request.

Councilperson Megginson suggested that if we are anticipating a parking problem, we could use the lot behind the tennis courts that has been used for other events. We could put up sign to allow parking.

Gail Seitz of The Strand advised that the event committee has done some outreach to secure additional parking in town. They will be using the parking lots of the Methodist Church and the former site of Brosius-Eliason. The Senior Center will permit use of their parking lot as long as the building isn't rented for an event.

Councilperson Vannucci stated that there was no problem last year.

New Business

First Reading of Ordinance 504 to amend Section 230-25 of the Code of the City of New Castle to permit limited retail sales in Industrial Zones via special exception from the Board of Adjustment.

City Building Official Jeff Bergstrom commented that as the economy has evolved, wholesalers have requested the ability to have on-site pickup from internet retail sales. The Ordinance restricts that no more than 10% of their space can be used for retail sales. There is an annual sale by a wholesaler of kitchen cookware that occupies more than 10% of the building for one weekend per year that needs to be addressed as well as nonprofit retail sales.

President Ratchford read the Ordinance.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on Resolution No. 2015-52, for the City of New Castle to Adopt the New Castle County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The **Motion** to consider Resolution No. 2015-52 was made by Councilperson Megginson and seconded by Councilperson Vannucci.

City Building Official Jeff Bergstrom advised that the County has adopted a plan that is inclusive of smaller jurisdictions such as the City of New Castle. The City was part of the original plan developed in 2004 and has worked with County on the revised 2009 and 2014 versions. Having an All Hazard Mitigation Plan is a requirement of the federal government. Formally adopting the County plan provides the ability to apply for and receive grants.

President Ratchford read the resolution.

Councilperson Di Mondì asked if this Plan puts any responsibility on the citizens of New Castle. They are already paying flood insurance for nothing but protecting people's beach homes. Mr. Bergstrom disagrees with the statement that there is no value to flood insurance. He believes that this Plan is the best of FEMA because it is about advance planning.

President Ratchford asked if the Plan impacts the amount of compensation the City may request after a disaster. Mr. Bergstrom advised that funding for both advance planning and repairs after a disaster are impacted by adopting the Plan. There is no cost to the City to participate except for some City employee time. All out-of-pocket costs are paid with Federal funds. The program includes grants to take preventative measures. Overall, participating takes the burden away from the City and citizens.

Resolution No. 2015-44 passed unanimously.

Comments from the Floor

Gene Dempsey of Delaware Street thanked Council for all they do for this town.

The **Motion to adjourn** was made by Councilperson Megginson, seconded by Councilperson Vannucci and **passed unanimously**. Council adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Council met in Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Wurtzel
Clerk of the City of New Castle